UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
7th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 7 October 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Ms. DIOP (Vice-Chairman)	(Senegal)

CONTENTS

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

92-56869 6000S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.7
14 October 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. PRONK (Netherlands) said that new developments, such as the weakening of nation States as the result of the increase in uncontrolled world capital movements in the monetary sphere alone, unrelated to productive investment, and newly emerging domestic conflicts with major social and economic consequences, had made it all the more urgent to broaden the global development agenda once again. Economic and political liberalization did not always go hand in hand and the social emancipation of ethnic groups by powerful central authorities had unleashed forces which were basically egocentric. The 1990s could best be described as a decade of transition. Transition would take time, would require a new approach to development, more resources and also a reform of institutions. It must be recognized that conflicts within societies were not only normal but inherent to development itself and that no durable peace could be achieved without striking a balance between social and economic objectives, on the one hand, and political and security objectives, on the other.

2. Nations which had opted for both political democracy and a market economy were now debating the virtues of adopting a top-down approach to economic development which generated rapid economic growth and relegated issues on equity and democracy to the background as opposed to the bottom-up approach which allowed people to participate on an equal footing in development from the very beginning. The United Nations could foster the dialogue about the real meaning of human development in a rapidly changing global society of nations and peoples and could also support transition. However, transitions required resources, as did relief, resettlement of refugees and reconstruction of infrastructure, all of which were prerequisites for economic development.

3. It had been agreed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that substantial new and additional funding would be provided in order to ensure a prompt and effective implementation of Agenda 21. In his delegation's view, industrialized countries should agree upon a substantial replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA) which was the best means of helping the poorest countries to break out of abject poverty and human misery and move towards economic reform and development. Secondly, a substantial earth increment should be added to IDA to demonstrate a willingness to put into practice what had been agreed upon in Rio. His delegation had been disappointed by the reticence shown at the recent annual meeting of the World Bank and surprised by the tendency to consider contributions to an earth increment as voluntary. The idea of an earth increment did not need to be limited to IDA. If it was agreed to establish earth increments to the regional development banks and funds and even to the European Development Fund of the European Community, national environmental action and priorities of developing countries based on Agenda 21 would receive the necessary multilateral financial attention they really deserved. A

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

consensus had also been reached that, if adequately restructured, the Global Environment Facility was the most appropriate mechanism to meet the incremental costs of dealing with environmental problems of a global character. And, in that respect, the aim should be to increase the resources of the Facility up to a level about the same size as IDA, since only a fund of that size could seriously tackle the enormous problems in that field.

4. Far-reaching measures should be taken to help the least developed countries overcome their debt problems. Although the Paris Club had agreed, in December 1991, on a new package to reduce the debt of the least developed countries, the recent decision to include a commercial and therefore non-concessional option in the Trinidad Terms would, in fact, diminish the prospects of reducing the debt of the poorest and least developed countries.

5. The outcome of the Rio Conference was sufficiently substantive to make his Government maintain its offer to provide new and additional financial resources up to a maximum of 0.1 per cent of net national income in addition to its current commitment for development assistance. That offer was, however, conditional upon the number and nature of commitments by other countries to raise additional resources. Noting that the European Community had offered to make an initial contribution of 3 billion ECU, he expressed the hope that much of it would be through the provision of new and additional resources.

6. There was a need to review the availability of new and additional resources for sustainable development in terms not only of their quantity and quality but also of their composition. A new approach to development might also require a fresh definition of development assistance and could be broadened to include financing for United Nations peace and security programmes in developing countries. Donors and beneficiaries alike should be allowed to participate in the review and monitoring of international assistance and that was one crucial reason why a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development was needed. The Commission should become the core institution to monitor and review the implementation of Agenda 21 and the availability of the necessary resources for its implementation.

7. Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon) said that real solutions must be found to the scourges of underdevelopment, poverty and ignorance. for international peace and stability were at stake. Political will was vital to the success of that undertaking. All nations should do their utmost to prevent confrontation between North and South, as experience had demonstrated that confrontation was not the way to solve the problems of mankind.

8. Concerted efforts were required to help the least developed countries overcome their economic structural deficiencies and attain sustainable growth. In that connection, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development represented an important investment in the future of mankind. The proposed Commission on Sustainable Development would be a vital instrument for monitoring the implementation of various programmes in developed and developing countries.

(Mr. Mahmoud, Lebanon)

9. The need to enhance regional cooperation was becoming increasingly evident; such cooperation, particularly in the areas of education, energy, natural resources and communication, could do much to promote sustainable growth in many countries. The regional economic and social commissions could play a constructive role in promoting such cooperation.

10. The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields was an important item on the Committee's agenda. Improving the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities was an urgent task if the challenges that lay ahead were to be met.

11. Miss Diop (Senegal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

12. Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka) said that the Committee should urgently focus attention on two fundamental tasks: eradicating poverty and ensuring the future of the planet. In tackling those tasks, the international community must strive to achieve a proper balance between development and environment. International cooperation and far-sighted domestic policies were vital to maintain such a balance.

13. Development was the first priority. A consensus seemed to be emerging on a new style of development, sustainable development. However, developing countries did not have the necessary financial resources and technology to achieve that goal. It was in the interests of the world community to help them in that task. In that connection, the proposal to convene an international conference on development financing was both timely and appropriate.

14. The world was becoming increasingly interdependent following the end of the cold war; new power rivalries should not be allowed to jeopardize that trend. The challenges facing the developing countries were likely to become even more formidable as a result of the radical changes that had taken place in the world's economic structure. The developing countries were concerned that attention would be diverted away from urgent development problems, that resources would be redirected elsewhere and that commodity markets would remain depressed.

15. If the economic gap between the North and the South were allowed to persist it would jeopardize world peace and stability and endanger the new consensus required for global sustainable development. Accordingly, he called for the elimination of protectionism, managed trade and unilateralism.

16. An improvement in the North-South dialogue was fundamental to achieving economic growth in the South and in the rest of the world; the key to such improvement was a firm commitment by the international community to the right to development and to the principles of equity and justice. Those principles should be applied without any double standards. In that connection he expressed the hope that a genuine effort would be made to bring the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations to a successful conclusion and noted

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

that UNCTAD must be strengthened so that it could play a greater role in international trade.

17. Although increased aid was important, developing countries could not continue to rely on that alone; in the long run aid must be replaced by trade and self-reliance. In the context of self-reliance, South-South cooperation was extremely important.

18. With respect to regional cooperation in South Asia, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had undertaken many important initiatives to accelerate growth in its member countries. Such initiatives included the decision to establish an independent South Asian commission on poverty alleviation and a South Asian Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA) to promote trade and commerce among SAARC countries; a study on the impact of global climate change on the environment in the region had also been initiated.

19. The effectiveness of the various United Nations decisions and resolutions aimed at achieving economic development depended on genuine commitment on the part of Member States to the realization of that goal, a change in the flow of resources between developed and developing countries and a more effective United Nations based on the principles of universality, sovereign equality of Member States and democracy and transparency.

20. Mr. TINT SWE (Myanmar) said that there could be no lasting peace as long as the majority of the world's population lived in a state of underdevelopment and abject poverty. It was high time the international community started to make concerted efforts to bring about economic revitalization and growth, particularly in the developing countries. The emerging global economic order should provide more equitable economic opportunities for all countries. Only a strong, open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system could foster growth in international trade and contribute to global prosperity. Consequently, the early and successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was of utmost importance. Another significant component of world economic recovery was effective macroeconomic coordination, particularly by the developed countries whose policies had a direct bearing on the current state of the world economy.

21. The economic situation of the least developed countries continued to deteriorate. Most of them had had negative growth rates for over a decade and many were undertaking major economic reforms, often at high social cost. The international community must do its part by meeting its commitment to implement fully the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

22. It was important to consolidate and build on the achievements of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The international community was being provided with a broad framework for a new global partnership in the common quest for sustainable development, and the provision

(Mr. Tint Swe, Myanmar)

of adequate, new and additional resources to the developing countries to enable them to implement Agenda 21 was essential for the attainment of that goal. In addition, environmentally sound technologies must be transferred to the developing countries on preferential and concessional terms.

23. The Commission on Sustainable Development was the primary intergovernmental mechanism recommended by the Conference for the implementation of its decisions. His delegation would participate actively in the Second Committee's efforts to determine the specific procedures and organizational modalities of the Commission.

24. The Conference had reaffirmed the sovereign right of countries to use their own natural resources in keeping with their development objectives and priorities. Developed countries and international institutions should not use environmental considerations or conditionalities as an excuse for interfering in the internal affairs of developing countries, nor should environmental considerations be used to introduce any form of conditionality in aid or development financing, or to impose trade barriers affecting the export and development efforts of developing countries.

25. Mr. KRYZHANIVSKIY (Ukraine) said that Ukraine, which had recently celebrated the first anniversary of the recovery of its independence, was firmly committed to the market-oriented model of economic development and was resolved to speed up the process of privatization and to increase the independence of economic agents by strengthening the influence of administrative structures on the State sector of the economy through the use of economic levers. Support for entrepreneurship, liberalization of foreign economic activity, the creation of favourable conditions for foreign investment and withdrawal from the "single rouble area" were among the priorities of its economic policy.

26. In carrying out those radical economic reforms and accelerating its integration into the world economy, Ukraine was relying primarily on its own strengths and the talent and industriousness of its people. At the same time, it wished to cooperate with such institutions as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Ukraine was not seeking hand-outs or humanitarian aid but had come to those organizations with plans for cooperation in promising economic programmes.

27. United Nations programmes and projects in the social and economic fields should yield more practical results for Ukraine, as well as for all other countries. The comprehensive processes of the transition to a market economy should receive an adequate response from the United Nations and be reflected in its practical work.

28. His delegation was pleased that new approaches to the role of the Organization in the strengthening of international cooperation for development

(Mr. Kryzhanivskiy, Ukraine)

had been put forward during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, which had made significant improvements in its methods of work. His delegation hoped that the Committee would consider and develop those new approaches.

29. Efforts to restructure of the social and economic sector of the United Nations and institute administrative and financial reforms must take account of the interests of all countries, particularly countries that received international aid. Such reforms should contribute to the harmonization of the economic interests of all members of the international community.

30. Ukraine could not agree with the methodology used to assess the contributions of the States that had emerged from the former Soviet Union. The latest recommendations of the Committee on Contributions would have the effect of increasing Ukraine's contribution by more than 50 per cent. Those recommendations had been made contrary to existing criteria and violated the consensus that had been reached at the previous session of the General Assembly.

31. The solution of social and economic problems depended on the availability of additional resources. The recent trend on the part of some countries to reduce their military expenditure provided a real opportunity for obtaining such resources. It was essential that that trend should become universal and that the new resources should be used to finance programmes of the United Nations system.

32. One of the major priorities of the United Nations should be the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development. The basic documents of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development served as a good starting-point for future work. In order to preserve the "spirit of Rio", it was necessary to establish an organizational mechanism to implement the decisions of the Conference and, in particular, the provisions of Agenda 21.

33. The structure of the United Nations bodies dealing with environmental protection should be improved. The establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development was a step in the right direction. The Commission should become the principal coordinating centre for all environmental protection activities undertaken by the United Nations system. A comprehensive study should be made of the possibility of convening the Security Council at least once a year to consider environmental problems that posed a potential threat to peace and security. His delegation supported the idea of establishing an institution to determine international responsibility for damage to the environment, in particular an international environmental court. It was also in favour of creating an international force - the "United Nations Green Helmets" - which could respond quickly to environmental emergencies and disputes.

(Mr. Kryzhanivskiy, Ukraine)

34. Ukraine attached particular importance to the increased involvement of the United Nations in mobilizing international cooperation to mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. It was necessary to take specific practical steps to alleviate the effects of the disaster, and his delegation hoped that the Secretariat would consider new approaches in that area. Ukraine was experiencing economic difficulties and was counting on the financial and material assistance of the international community. Preparations should be made for the convening of an international forum for representatives of international business circles and social organizations with a view to mobilizing resources for the implementation of the Joint Plan of International Cooperation to Mitigate the Consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster.

35. Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

36. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that the international community should endeavour to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of the conclusions, recommendations and decisions of the Cartagena Commitment. In that respect, his delegation welcomed the establishment by the Trade and Development Board of four standing committees and five ad hoc working groups in accordance with the recommendations of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

37. More than any other developing region, Africa was more dependent on the production and marketing of commodities. The solution of the commodities problem therefore continued to be essential to the success of Africa's efforts to achieve economic growth and sustainable development. The Standing Committee on Commodities should endeavour to find fair and lasting solutions to the problem of plummeting commodity prices, outmoded commodities agreements and the lack of real progress in the preparation of new agreements that could guarantee fair and remunerative prices. If the commodities sector was to contribute to the achievement of global development objectives, which included the satisfaction of the basic needs of populations and the improvement of their standard of living and serve as a springboard for industrialization, it was necessary to establish a solid price base for commodities.

38. In the area of food and agricultural development, the main priority was to achieve, in the short term, food security, since food aid provided in response to emergency situations and natural disasters did not promote a long-term solution to hunger, malnutrition and food self-sufficiency. In the area of new and renewable sources of energy and the development of the energy resources for the developing countries, the measures to be taken should be in keeping with the recommendations and decisions adopted at the Rio Conference.

39. One of the first measures to be taken in the follow-up of the Rio Conference would be the formal establishment of the high-level Commission on Sustainable Development, whose methods of operation would be determined at the current session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

40. Benin had been one of the 155 States that had signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which it intended to ratify early in 1993. Since the 50 ratifications required for the Convention to enter into force were unlikely to be obtained before the end of 1992, he suggested that the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee be postponed until sometime in 1993.

41. The elimination of poverty in the developing countries was a major objective. His delegation therefore fully supported the chapter of Agenda 21 that dealt with the complex and multidimensional problem of poverty. It was clear that any action on the part of the international community to resolve that problem should be based on country-specific programmes and the provision of international assistance for national action. His delegation hoped that, in view of the end of the cold war and the relaxation of international tension, sufficient resources could be allocated to the common task of eliminating poverty and the scourges of hunger, malnutrition and illness that accompanied it.

42. It was vital to strengthen international cooperation in the search for a lasting solution to the external debt problems of the developing countries. With regard to Africa, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s should be implemented by the international community and an international conference on African external debt should be organized. Operational activities for development should take into account the recommendations of Agenda 21 for a full integration of socio-economic and environmental issues in economic planning. The United Nations should play a leading role in the elimination of poverty, hunger and illiteracy, the improvement of health, the achievement of a more equitable distribution of income, the optimization of human resources and the establishment of a new partnership between the developed and the developing countries. An international conference on money and finance for development would provide an ideal framework within which to discuss the necessary finance for those objectives. The creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was proof of the importance attached by the United Nations to disaster relief activities. In accordance with the objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, stress should be laid on disaster prevention and mitigation, since special economic assistance was not always sufficient to cover the needs generated by disasters, and such programmes did not always have the desired impact.

43. Mr. PERKINS (United States of America) said that in an era of economic integration, international currency volatility and privatization of State industries, economic and finance issues were gaining in prominence in the work of the United Nations. Economic security, opportunity and competitiveness would become a primary mission of the United States. Prosperity, along with peacemaking and non-proliferation was essential for world peace, and depended on a growth-oriented international economic order which safeguarded the environment and in which the private sector was the engine for the expansion

(Mr. Perkins, United States)

of developing and emerging economies. His delegation intended to sponsor a specific initiative on privatization in order to help developing and emerging countries achieve economic transition based on sound national policies, and to increase opportunities for trade and investment and draw much-needed foreign direct investment. Poverty alleviation also required qualitative improvements in health, education and nutrition. The United States had long been the single greatest donor of development aid and was about to approve a $12.3 billion increase in its commitment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). His country was considering a reform of its foreign assistance institutions, laying greater stress on assistance for environmental purposes, and strongly supported United Nations efforts on the eradication of hunger and malnutrition. The United States long-standing support for emergency humanitarian relief would continue, and he called on Member States to designate stockpiles of resources to meet humanitarian emergencies. The United States would explore new ways to ensure adequate American financial support for humanitarian operations.

44. His delegation wished to ensure effective follow-up to the Rio Conference and strongly supported the establishment of a Commission on Sustainable Development as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council to promote the implementation of Agenda 21 and the integration of economics and environment. Such a commission should provide a forum for both Governments and relevant intergovernmental organizations and financial institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations. His Government hoped to ratify the Framework Convention on Climate Change and welcomed the convening of the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at Geneva in December. That Committee was the appropriate forum in which to undertake preparations for the entry into force of the Convention. His country would continue to make voluntary contributions to the special fund established under General Assembly resolution 45/212 and urged other Governments and organizations to do the same.

45. His delegation applauded the Secretary-General's ongoing managerial reform of the United Nations and urged Member States to work towards true reform throughout the system. Reform was needed in the United Nations Secretariat, in the Economic and Social Council, and in the United Nations operational activities at the field level. His delegation would press for cost-effectiveness and greater self-reliance, including further decentralization of the United Nations development system to the country level, and would follow up on its recent proposal for reform of the United Nations development system field representation. His delegation would call on the Committee to consider the future role and mandate of the World Food Council (WFC); it was disappointed that WFC had been unable to carry out its role and mandate as originally foreseen. His Government supported action by the Committee to reassign the WFC policy coordination function to the Economic and Social Council and its inter-agency coordination function to the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

46. Mr. NANDOE (Suriname) after endorsing the statement delivered by the representative of Pakistan, on behalf of the Group of 77, said that economic and social issues should be given as much attention as those involving peace and security. The world economy remained fragile: in the industrialized world, growth remained sluggish and unemployment high, and in most developing countries the situation was no better. While development was primarily the responsibility of the developing countries, the policies they adopted could only succeed within a favourable global environment. Structural adjustment reforms entailed considerable social costs; unless those countries received external support to mitigate such costs, their fragile democracies could be at risk. In the past too much attention had been focused on growth and not enough on fundamental issues such as the eradication of poverty and equitable distribution of the fruits of development.

47. The emergence of new centres of economic power in the industrialized countries and subregional economic groupings in the developing countries had given rise to economic multipolarism, which would contribute to trade liberalization and impart new dynamism to the multilateral trade system. However, the position of the developing countries could be weakened, since they lacked the technical and financial resources to compete effectively in the world market. Furthermore, they were compelled to transfer a substantial part of their financial resources to their donors and also risked being "crowded out" of international capital markets by the newly industrialized economies and the central and eastern European countries. The expected rise in interest rates meant that the prospects for developing countries dependent on official development assistance were not very bright. He wondered whether there would be sufficient political will to mobilize sufficient resources for some of the United Nations programmes, such as Agenda 21. The Chairman of the Group of 77 had urged the economic powers to resolve their differences, especially on agricultural trade, and to conclude the Uruguay Round. It was vital for the developing countries that protectionist measures be dismantled. He appealed for an open and transparent multilateral trading system.

48. Mr. FERNANDEZ DE COSSIO (Cuba) said that the promises made to the third world countries at the end of the cold war era had proved to be hollow; developing countries had had little or no say in decisions taken at the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, by the international financial institutions, or at meetings of the seven most highly industrialized countries. Financial and technological resources continued to flow chiefly between the countries of the North, added to which political opportunism ensured that aid went first to the so-called "economies in transition", rather than to the neediest. The third world countries were in fact now more marginalized than they had been two years previously; and it was clear that the new world order was an elitist order, from which the poor were to be excluded. The structural crisis of underdevelopment had been compounded by the recession in the industrialized countries. Although the existence of imbalances in those same countries was a major cause of that recession, there was no way of compelling those powerful economies to make the necessary adjustments. The result was increased poverty and hunger for the vast majority of the peoples of the Earth.

(Mr. Fernandez de Cossio, Cuba)

49. While placing its hopes in the role that the United Nations could play in international cooperation for development, his delegation rejected the attempts being made to distort that role and to reduce its mandate in that sphere by restricting its activities to provision of conditional technical and humanitarian aid. The view that international cooperation was a part of the processes of peace-keeping and preventive diplomacy contradicted the spirit and purpose of the Charter and undermined the legal basis adopted in the course of many years of effort and dialogue.

50. If it really wished to promote effective international cooperation for development and to strengthen the role of the United Nations in that field, the Committee must work at its current session towards the fulfilment of decisions adopted and undertakings entered into by all, according particular attention to the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

51. In recent years there had been several attempts to use the Committee as a forum for the promotion and imposition of neo-liberal economic models drawn up in the North, as part of the process of recolonization that characterized the new world order. The increasing conditionality attached to external aid had compelled the third world countries to liberalize and restructure their economies at considerable social and human cost, in return for artificial and sporadic economic growth that did nothing to resolve the problems of underdevelopment. Such ideologically inspired models invoked efficiency as the end justifying unfair means, claiming that a totally free market led naturally to efficiency. But experience had shown that such models merely served to increase the wealth of one quarter of humanity, sacrificing the other three quarters to the currency speculators, increasing unemployment, creating millions of poor and homeless persons in poor and rich countries alike, promoting unsustainable lifestyles, squandering non-renewable resources, and threatening the planet with ecological destruction. The social and political consequences of such doctrines were already apparent in the world's richest economy.

52. The disadvantages Cuba faced as an underdeveloped country were being compounded by the political changes in Eastern Europe and the demise of the Soviet Union, which had led to the abrupt curtailment of Cuba's traditional economic links. In the course of just two years, Cuba's products had lost 70 per cent of their purchasing power. Cuba had not, however, abandoned its development priorities, and had avoided reductions in its social security, health and education programmes. In addition to those adverse factors, Cuba had also to contend for the past 30 years, with the criminal economic embargo imposed on it by the United States. That embargo was now being stepped up, the purpose being to precipitate a social and political crisis. Although the General Assembly had repeatedly deplored the use of economic measures as a means of coercion against developing countries and had called upon the international community to take urgent measures to eliminate such practices, the Organization as a whole had failed in its duty to take urgent and effective steps to halt that embargo.

53. Mr. GHAREKHAN (India) said that, like most developing countries, India had undertaken far-reaching reforms aimed at deregulation, privatization, the freeing of markets, liberalization of the external sector and attracting foreign direct investment. In those efforts, it needed the continued understanding and cooperation of its developed country partners. If the international economic environment remained inhospitable to the developing countries, such national efforts would be frustrated. The recent upheaval in currency markets underscored the need for enhanced macroeconomic surveillance and coordination, as proposed by the Group of 77. In addition to disaster relief, conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance, the United Nations should play an enhanced role in promoting development in the developing countries and continue to debate the complexities and anomalies of the world economy, without losing sight of the holistic vision of its founding fathers.

54. The availability of finances on an assured and stable basis was essential to United Nations operations. If resources continued to dry up, so would activity. The problems of duplication, waste and fragmentation should also be addressed. Multinational assistance should be voluntary, without conditions and flexible, and programming and execution of operational activities should be the responsibility of developing countries.

55. The United Nations drew strength from the principles of multilateralism, which could be jeopardized by unilateral actions and conditionalities. There was a danger that regional trading blocs could become inward-looking groupings, particularly in the developing world. India attached great importance to a balanced outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. Developing countries needed greater market access, special and differential treatment, flexible trade policy instruments and liberalization of trade in agriculture and textiles. The rising tide of protectionism should be curbed.

56. India attached particular importance to the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights. The need to protect intellectual property had to be balanced against the need for developing countries to devise laws specific to their own requirements, with due regard to the developmental and public policy dimensions.

57. Increasing resource flows was a matter of priority for the developing countries. His delegation hoped that Governments would be spurred to achieve the target of devoting 0.7 per cent of their GNP to official development assistance. Developed countries should encourage private investment in developing countries. The resource base of the multilateral financial institutions must be further strengthened, and concessional lending by the International Development Association substantially increased in real terms, on the occasion of the tenth replenishment. Despite optimism generated by limited official and commercial debt arrangements, the external debt situation of developing countries continued to pose a serious threat to their economic viability. A comprehensive debt strategy should encompass all types of debt and debtor countries and should be based on economic rather than political

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

considerations. It was particularly important to examine the resource requirements of low-income countries such as India which had met their debt service commitments in a timely fashion.

58. Agenda 21 and the various agreements that had emerged from the Rio Conference must be implemented as a matter of urgency. To that end, commitments to provide adequate, new and additional resources and technology to developing countries on non-commercial and preferential terms must be honoured. Developed countries' agreement to make initial financial commitments at the current session of the General Assembly would give effect to the Conference decision. The Commission on Sustainable Development should be a forum for cooperation, rather than for mutual recriminations and interference. It should be large enough to be representative, constituted on the basis of equitable geographical representation, and located so as to facilitate the widest possible participation. It must regularly review cross-sectoral commitments, particularly on finance and technology, and might review the aggregate impact of national policies to promote sustainable development.

59. It was generally recognized that energy consumption in developing countries must inevitably grow. India attached considerable importance to the promotion of non-conventional sources of energy, particularly solar and wind energy. Through research and development, it was making determined efforts to achieve a breakthrough that would make those sources of energy technically and economically feasible. His delegation hoped that international cooperative research, information-sharing and funding would be facilitated both bilaterally and multilaterally.

60. Mr. GALBADRAKH (Mongolia) said that the overall economic environment during the previous year had been extremely complex, and the economic recession in the industrialized nations had further widened the tremendous gap between North and South. The least developed countries, and those undergoing transition to a market economy, like Mongolia, continued to experience difficulty in dismantling the old economic structures and laying the foundations for new patterns of development.

61. Many developing countries had worked hard to implement policies aimed at a radical restructuring of their economies, combating inflation and creating a climate conducive to foreign investment. While it was true that every country was responsible for its own economic and social development, it was equally true that the international community had a collective responsibility to promote growth and well-being in the developing countries. It was becoming increasingly evident that the prosperity of the developed world could not be divorced from that of the developing countries. The aspirations of the developing countries to achieve pivotal development objectives were outlined in the final documents of the Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as in recent key texts of the United Nations.

(Mr. Galbadrakh, Mongolia)

62. Realistic approaches and innovative solutions must speedily be found to the international debt problem, which threatened the stability of the entire world economy. His delegation welcomed the efforts and progress made in the negotiations on debt rescheduling and debt forgiveness. Stronger support should be given to such ideas as debt-for-equity swaps, debt-for-nature swaps and debt-for-development swaps.

63. Mongolia was in favour of regional integration agreements and welcomed the emergence of trading blocs world wide. However, the process of multilateral trade liberalization would suffer a severe setback if the formation of regional trade and economic arrangements were to entail higher barriers vis-à-vis other parts of the world. His delegation took the view that barriers against non-participants must be reduced concurrently with the establishment of the new regional arrangements. In that context, the major trading countries must intensify their efforts to bring the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations to a satisfactory and balanced conclusion.

64. Mongolia attached great importance to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Successful and timely implementation of Agenda 21 programmes would enhance the prospects for sustainable development. It was to be hoped that, at its current session, the General Assembly would take appropriate decisions on the organizational aspects of the follow-up activities to the Conference, and, in particular, on the functions and structure of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Commission's composition must reflect the interests of all countries, particularly the developing countries. His delegation also looked forward to cooperating with other delegations on the issue of concluding a convention to combat desertification.

65. Mongolia welcomed the growing role played by the United Nations in international cooperation for the revitalization of economic growth in the 1990s. By virtue of the expertise it had accumulated over nearly half a century, the United Nations was uniquely qualified to serve as a forum for the discussion of development strategies and policies. It must thus undertake bold, innovative and perhaps even painful reform measures in order to enhance the effectiveness of its activities, especially in the economic and social fields. Mongolia welcomed the ongoing process of restructuring, and endorsed the view that the structures and agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should be reviewed and the subsidiary bodies further streamlined. The high-level and coordination segments of the first substantive session of the Economic and Social Council held in July had marked an important step in the restructuring process.

66. Miss Diop (Senegal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

67. Mr. BRAISH (Afghanistan) said that the slow-down in economic activity, the deterioration in the terms of trade, high levels of unemployment and inflation, the drying up of multilateral concessional flows for development, insecurity and insufficiency of food supplies, rigid and unfavourable terms for transfer of technology and hardening of conditionalities had all seriously hindered the efforts of the developing countries to achieve economic growth and promote social and economic development. Many developing countries' per capita GNP had fallen, export earnings had declined ominously, despite efforts by commodity-dependent developing countries to pursue export expansion; at the same time, the burden of debt service had increased dramatically. Attempts to expand export earnings in the agricultural and industrial sectors had been hampered by an erosion of multilateral discipline that had permitted a rise of protectionism, particularly in its selective and discriminatory non-tariff forms.

68. The problems facing land-locked developing countries were particularly acute; special and immediate alleviation measures should be taken for such countries as specified in the relevant General Assembly resolutions. No development policy could be just and realistic unless it took their special needs, problems and rights into consideration. In the context of revitalizing development, growth and international trade, the principles of respect for independence and national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations, equality and non-discrimination must be observed.

69. Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries was the proper means of securing rational and efficient use of their human, material, financial and technological resources. Such cooperation would contribute to strengthening solidarity and collective self-reliance among developing countries, and would diversify their economic relations. It would also be seen as the expression of their political will to achieve economic independence. However, cooperation among developing countries would certainly be more fruitful if coupled with constructive cooperation between developed and developing countries. In that regard, Afghanistan welcomed Agenda 21.

70. While Afghanistan had recovered its sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned and Islamic character it had paid a heavy price: 14 years of war had produced enormous destruction and left over a million dead and more than 2 million disabled; in addition nearly 6 million had taken refuge in neighbouring countries and 2 million had been internally displaced. It was now faced with the task of having to rebuild its entire economic and social infrastructure. He thanked those countries that had stood beside the Afghan nation, and expressed the hope that Member States would extend their full support to draft resolutions to be submitted under agenda item 141.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.